

SEED TO BANYAN TREE



Bala Mandir Research Foundation

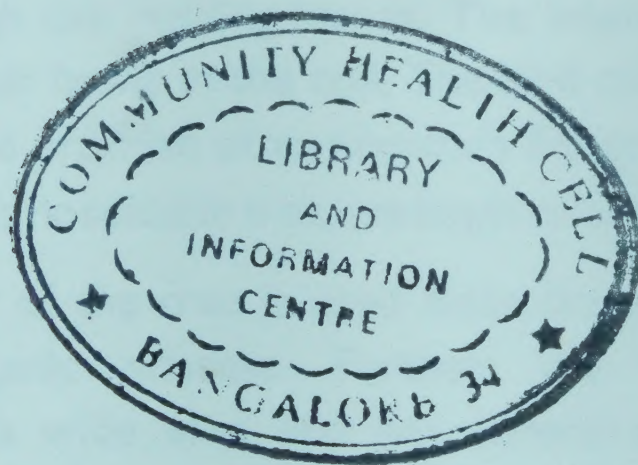
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SEED TO BANYAN TREE



Bala Mandir Research Foundation

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SEED TO BANYAN TREE



SEED TO BANYAN TREE FOUNDATION

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Preamble

Today, we live in a global village. The transformation of the globe into a network of a thousand webs has been speedy. The miracle of the airplane a hundred years ago is now routine transport and the stuff of children's drawings. The 'long distance telephone call' has gone into family archives. A 'cell' is not only a biological unit, but a veritable extension of the individual. The travelling time of a message from Australia to Zimbabwe is two seconds!

In this contemporary complex of connectivity, a friendly neighbour from Toronto in Canada came to us, ten years ago, with a living seed, clutched carefully in her fist.

We planted it in good soil and gave it sunlight, water and the sound of children's laughter. Their voices in play helped the seed to grow into a sapling and rapidly after that, to a bush and a tree. Every season, the tree sprouted new twigs, flowers and leaves, grew both brown bark and red berry and spread into a luxuriant canopy in verdant green.

The earth below captures the many patterns of sunlight filtered through the rustling leaves. The latest aerial roots have found their home in the soil. The bird calls bring hope and joy and the promise of tomorrow's fledglings. Sitting in the shade of this hospitable tree, we begin to tell its story.

The metaphor of the tree is used since the expansion has been an organic process. Further, the banyan tree encompasses a wide area and has several self-sustaining branches and aerial roots. Hence "seed" to a "banyan tree"

S.Anandalakshmy

September 2008



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Chapter I

THE SEED IS SOWN

The “Learning Through Play” Calendars are introduced in India

In 1997, Hincks-Dellcrest initiated a partnership with Bala Mandir Research Foundation (BMRF), Chennai. Bala Mandir Research Foundation caters to children from disadvantaged environments. Using the ‘Learning Through Play’ Calendar has helped the management in understanding the concepts and dimensions of parenting. In this endeavour, the institution has undertaken some innovative steps, and touched upon diverse fields of knowledge, such as philosophy, language, literature, disability, gender, communication and software technology.

Though the focus was on the child, the functionaries developed a sense of respect for the enormous responsibility of parents and other caregivers, and an appreciation of their struggles to provide children the best, against all odds. There was a change in the understanding of responsibility, from biological parents to all persons in a parenting role. Information, both quantitative and qualitative, was included. The use and adaptation of the tool to cater to diverse situations and needs became the focus. In the report that follows, there are three phases described. The first deals with the experiences within Bala Mandir and the second, the experiences with other institutions, and the third with diversification.

The ‘Learning Through Play’ Calendars or LTPC have proved to be universal in their messages and supportive of many traditionally honoured child-rearing practices in India. The mainly pictorial Calendars, with their clear messages and simple language, serve as a meaningful tool even in the hands of unlettered parents.

Armed with the tool, Bala Mandir embarked on a serious effort to spread the messages of good parenting, as well as that of understanding children better.

The "Learning Through Play" Calendars

The Learning Through Play Calendars are neatly-packaged parenting tools, depicting the various stages of the child's development from birth to 6 years in all the domains: physical, cognitive, emotional, social, communicative and above all, the concept of the self. Furthermore, the illustrations have a focus on the child's perspective, rather than only the adult's. The relationship of the child to the parent or other caregiver is implicit in each picture of the Calendar. The pictorial Character is a trump card in its value as an educational instrument. Abstract ideas, which teachers, social workers and doctors were struggling to communicate, have suddenly slipped into a home-made simplicity and accessibility.

There are two sequential Calendars : Birth - 3 Years, which covers eight developmental stages, and 3 - 6 Years, which covers six developmental stages.

The five areas of development in the Calendar are as follows:

Sense of Self	Self awareness and feelings, helping children to develop self-confidence and a sense of identity
Physical Development	Learning to control the way the body moves and mastering physical skills.
Relationship	Development of social skills - relating with family, friends and others.
Understanding	Learning about the world around and using intelligence to cope with daily activities.
Communication	Learning to listen, understand and express thoughts and feelings - thus connecting with people.

Included in the Calendars are a careful selection of the developmental milestones. There is a broad-based categorisation of developmental stages, providing a wide range for normalcy, which would help to understand and accept individual variations.

Background of the "Learning Through Play" Calendar

The Calendar "Learning through Play" from Birth to 3 Years, based on the work with poor and deprived communities in Nigeria, was developed for the Parents- Helping-Parents programme in the mid-eighties under the direction

of Dr. Bea Ashem. Her work confirmed, via research documentation, that psycho-social stimulation is as vital an input to help the healthy growth and development of the child, as nutritional input.

Initially, the tool was used by home visitors who helped parents learn developmental activities and understand how these would benefit children. This, in turn, enabled the parents to feel empowered, knowing that they could enhance their child's development by active interaction and innovative activities.

The Calendar, designed by experts, was most appropriate to promote holistic and healthy development of children. It contains well-researched critical inputs universal in nature, in the different stages of early childhood development, and stresses the importance of positive parent-child relationships for a child's sense of well-being.

The Calendar was used as a visual reminder of children's developmental stages. The captions under each picture were formulated by a small work group, comprising representatives from Toronto Public Health, North York Public Health, Dellcrest Children's Centre and Parents for Better Beginnings. They ensured that the captions further clarified the illustrated concepts and explained how each activity would benefit the child's development.

Activities shown in the Calendar are arranged according to chronological age and under the specific developmental domain that they stimulate. The categories—Sense of Self, Physical Growth, Relationships, Understanding and Communication—are based on the book, *Good Beginnings* by Judith Evans and Ellen Ilfeld.

To meet the needs of parents of children of the preschool age, the "Learning through Play" Calendar 3 to 6 Years, was later developed by a small working group from four agencies - Dellcrest Children's Centre, Babies' Best Start, North York Public Health Department, and Toronto Department of Public Health - in consultation with an advisory group consisting of Child Development Organisations, Boards of Education, Children's Mental Health Agencies and several ethno-specific organisations.

More seeds are dispersed

After India, El Salvador, Peru, Philippines and Pakistan have adopted the LTPC. More recently, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Ghana have

joined the club. This Calendar had been translated into different languages in Canada: Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Somali, Tamil, Chinese, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, and Portuguese and in India, into Kannada, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Malayalam, Telugu and Bengali.

With the growing number of partnerships, it was decided to start working together in three regions – Africa, South America and Asia. Three regional conferences were planned in 2007, and the First South Asia Conference was held in Chennai, India, in March 2007.



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Chapter 2

THE SEED SPROUTS AND GROWS

Bala Mandir has taken the application of the Calendar much further by using the basic concepts of parenting to reach out to children of all ages, and their parents. It has now become a versatile parenting tool.

**In India the LTP Project has unfolded in the following manner:-
1997-1999 – working within the Bala Mandir institution.**

Phase I

- In order to understand the tool and its potential in various ways, BMRF worked with LTPC within the Bala Mandir institution (pamphlet in folder), in the Foundling and Children's Section and with the adolescents in the home and school and
- Caregivers in all categories.

The association between Bala Mandir Research Foundation and Hincks-Dellcrest started on September 24th, 1997. It was a day of remembrance of the founder of Bala Mandir, Smt. Manjubhashini.

An awareness programme for NGOs was conducted in October '97, jointly, by Andrew Reesor Macdowell and Ramani Jayakumar of Hincks-Dellcrest and Usha Raghavan of ICCW-TN, and presided over by Mr. M.P. Vijayakumar, Director, D.S.W. The Bala Mandir representatives were Hema Srinivas and Chitra Krishnan. In this one-day workshop, the several aspects of child development were discussed and the Calendar (Birth to 3 Years) was introduced as the illustrated tool to communicate major parenting messages.

The visitors gave the following documents to BMRF.

- Copies of the Calendar in English and Tamil

- *Good Beginnings* by Judith Evans and Ellen Ilfeld.
- The Dellcrest Home Visitor's Training Manual
- A few videos and handouts.

Parenting through LTPC within Bala Mandir

Following this, the BMRF decided to go ahead with the dissemination of the 'parenting' concept. As a first step, the staff of BMRF were given an in-depth training in child development. The trainees were the executive staff of BMRF, matrons in the crèche, day care staff and primary school teachers. Since Bala Mandir had no child development expert, it called upon Ms. Padma Srinath to take up the training programme.

Once the training was over, it was decided to carry forward the messages to the parents of the children in the Crèche and Day Care Centre of Bala Mandir. Soon it also got extended to the other functionaries of Bala Mandir who had a parenting role to play, as well as to the adolescent boys and girls who lived in the hostels at Bala Mandir. The training was later taken over by a team of trainers, Hema Srinivas, Rekha Sudarshan and Lakshmi Gopal. By 1998, they gained a great deal of confidence in taking the training forward.

Parents were exposed to the Calendar over several sessions. There were wide variations in the size of the groups and the duration of the sessions, as the convenience of the mothers and fathers was taken into consideration. At the end of the year, two of the crèche workers who had been trained, also assisted as trainers.

Effectiveness of the Calendar as perceived by trainers

While introducing the Calendar messages to the mothers, the Calendar itself was evaluated by the trainers for acceptability, clarity and adequacy of content. The pictures were easily understood by participants with different levels of education and social experience. Though many were unlettered or had only a few years of schooling, their own native intelligence and curiosity helped them to understand the messages. Suitable messages on health, hygiene and nutrition were added appropriately by the trainers.

The graphic presentation was unique. The Calendar could be used to address a wide range of persons: affluent urban families to slum dwellers and rural poor.

THE TRUNK BROADENS

The Programme expands within Bala Mandir

- a. At the **institutional level**, an important change was that the training programme for parents became a regular feature. Two crèche teachers were drawn in as trainers. The training programme was standardised and put into a schedule. The programme was made mandatory for all the parents who admitted their children in the Bala Mandir crèche.

A one-day toy workshop was conducted for the **mothers**. The purpose of this exercise was to help them understand that the use of toys has several benefits for the development of the young child.

- b. The next group to be addressed was the **young, working women** staying in the transit home in Bala Mandir. These were women, in the age group of 20-26 years, who had been brought up in Bala Mandir and had no family of their own. They were working in jobs outside Bala Mandir, but had very few opportunities to meet anyone socially. The trainer decided to talk to them on Sundays and this was later extended to a full-fledged training programme. A suitable syllabus was then drawn based on their needs. It proved to be a tremendous learning experience even for the trainer. Some of the young women did so well that they wanted to become field workers and work with the families in the neighbourhood.
- c. After the success of this programme the **adolescent girls** in Bala Mandir, in classes 11 and 12, also went through a similar orientation programme of 21 sessions. The needs of this group were different. They were eager to know about love, friendship, eve-teasing, sex, dowry and so on. The syllabus had to be modified to suit their needs. This programme also gives the caregivers an opportunity to talk to the adolescents about the stress and anxiety which their parents must have felt before giving them up for foster care.
- d. The training programme for **adolescent boys** was an instance of serendipity. While screening a video on breastfeeding for mothers, the trainer noticed some of the adolescent boys peeping through the window. When this was discussed in the staff meeting, it was realised that since the boys had grown up in a children's institution, they had no direct or

indirect experience of breastfeeding. It was felt that it would be good for the boys to have a knowledge of family life. Thus a programme was evolved and gradually this was extended to all the boys in the school run by Bala Mandir. Every year for the boys of Stds. 10 and 12, family life and childcare skills are introduced through the LTPC, along with sex-education, peer interaction and understanding of relationships.

e) Extending into the community of the nearby slum

A socio-economic survey revealed that the families of the children who came from the slums lived mostly in huts or Government constructed concrete tenements. They lacked basic facilities, yet most houses were well maintained. Most families were nuclear, with a few joint families and single parents. Most mothers worked as housemaids and some worked in garment-import factories. The men were daily-wage labourers, painters, autodrivers and vendors.

Trainers realised how poverty and deprivation can prevent parents from fulfilling their children's needs and effectively force them to place their children in an institution.

f. Training staff at all levels

Towards the end of May 1998 one of the caregivers in the baby section fell and broke her back. Overnight there were 12 infants with no qualified 'primary caregiver'. Two of the 'housemothers' for older children who had been "Calendar-trained" stepped in and took over infant care with some understanding of infant development. Suddenly the whole dimension of childcare in Bala Mandir changed, with the realisation that the tool could be a resource for training childcare workers. Their formal training of 14 sessions was started on 17th May 1999.

The caregivers themselves came from emotionally deprived backgrounds. The trainer found them to be in a state of some anxiety. It sensitised the trainers to the problems of the matrons, and matrons to the problems of children.

The free and frank discussions helped the trainees to resolve their own conflicts and come to terms with their parenting and childhood experiences. The trainer also got an insight into the emotions and feelings of abandoned and neglected children.

A significant outcome of their training was that the management and the caregivers together endeavoured to create a "child-friendly environment". The young working women and adolescent girls had started taking turns in caring for the infants. Senior matrons, whose children were away at school during the day, also stepped in to help in feeding the children. This gave some respite to the caregivers, as there was a better worker-child ratio.

These are examples of experiments in improving the quality of care, using the LTPC as a tool. The learning and insights from these experiences helped in implementing the principles of child development in the daily routine.





Chapter 3

FRESH SHOOTS

Phase 2

Parenting programmes outside Bala Mandir

The years 1999-2004, saw the branching out of the Bala Mandir programme to other organisations in Chennai and Tamil Nadu. The work involved moving to:

- Other organisations in Chennai.
- Developing linkages, with different NGOs in Tamil Nadu and moving to Karnataka.
- Focusing on language translations of LTPC and resource materials to help train field workers.
- Undertaking work on LTPC support materials and training modules for different target groups of those in a parenting role.
- Working through Parent-Teacher-Associations to reach out to parents and kindergarten teachers.
- i. The projects undertaken in the next few years between 1999-2001 were not specifically planned, but grew organically in the course of working. They addressed different categories of functionaries in various organisations, both Government and non-Government, training institutions and professionals.
 - a. **Schools and PTAs** - By the end of the year 2000, Bala Mandir Research Foundation had built a strong methodology for interaction with parents, which led to the launch of the '**Joy of Parenting**' programme in January 2001 in Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan.

It was decided that the programme would be organised in the schools with toddler and K.G. sections. Sessions for parents in small groups

were held, in the morning for mothers and in the evenings for fathers and working mothers.

The Joy of Parenting Programme based on LTPC for parents was conducted in two batches between April 2001 and July 2001 for 2 branches of a leading school, Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan School in Chennai. About 60 parents of pre-school children participated in the programme along with the teachers. KG teachers of both schools were trained to enable them to take it forward to parents.

Rajaji Vidyashram was the next school to undertake a prolonged 25-day training, followed by many other city schools.

- b. The Parenting Programme moved out to three more institutions, the Indian Council of Child Welfare (ICCW) working with the urban poor and in rural areas, Children's Garden School Society catering to lower and middle income groups and SCS Kothari Academy for Women with affluent families as clientele.

Of the three institutions SCS Kothari Academy, ICCW and Children's Garden School in which the training programmes were conducted, a few staff members became resource persons for the later training sessions, which continued well into 2002.

- c. In April 2002, a trainers' training project was undertaken in partnership with three institutions ICCW, CHC - Bangalore and Vidya Sagar and was completed by 31st March 2003. The review for these projects was held in 2004.
- d. The Indian Council of Child Welfare had earlier organised a workshop for its field level functionaries and had found the exercise very useful. Two staff members of ICCW, who had been observers in the earlier programme continued to conduct the training for crèche workers. They conducted -
 - i. A 3-day training programme for crèche workers. - (Pre and post-training feedback available.)

The first evaluation of understanding of LTPC, effective implementation and dissemination of messages by the crèche workers conducted in September 2002, was done and gaps were identified. Home visit problems shared by the workers were solved.

2. Training of 35 trainees in the ICCW Bala Sevika Training programme, June - December 2002.

Lakshmi Gopal completed ongoing evaluation in September 2002. Final evaluation of trainees was completed by Usha Raghavan in December 2002.

- ii. **CHC - training of community workers in Karnataka** - BMRF's first experience outside Tamil Nadu came through a partnership with the NGO, Community Health Cell. Under the umbrella of this institution, 15 of its partner agencies were reached simultaneously. In partnership with Community Health Cell - Bangalore, a pilot project was undertaken to train 45 community workers, preschool teachers, institutional caregivers and health workers of 12 NGOs covering parents of children in the socio-economically deprived strata of society. The organisations included those working with child labour, street children, rag pickers, school dropouts, shelter homes, physically challenged, urban slum, tribal and rural communities and *Mahila Sanghas*. It laid the foundation for the future work undertaken by BMRF to train workers serving children from difficult parenting environments.

While all were working in the area of health or education, the focus of activity varied and different age groups were addressed, in their work.

A five-day training was provided to these institutions in April-May 2002.

A follow-up was carried out in January 2003. This revealed that:

- The age of the child was not a constraint to convey the values of parenting skills, since the trainees had used the Calendar effectively with older children as well.
- The messages were disseminated through workshops, meetings or inter-ventions in their ongoing programmes.
- Those who had received messages were parents of young children in the Crèche and Day Care School, drop-outs, rag pickers, those in shelter homes and rehabilitation homes and those with physically challenged children. Others who received the messages were women and men in the family, and adolescent girls who were part of the health programmes and *Mahila Sanghas*.

There were also *anganwadi* workers, ANMs and women in tribal and rural communities.

However the review highlighted the following new directions:

- To print LTPC in Kannada, the language of Karnataka.
- To initiate a process of networking on parenting in order to further spread the messages.
- To undertake capacity building of partner organisations in "Parenting Training" in the community.

iii. **Vidya Sagar** - A project partnership with Vidya Sagar for children with high risk birth history involved training of special educators and CBR workers, working with parents and bringing out 100 case studies.





Chapter 4

BRANCHING OUT TO EXPAND THE TREE

Phase 3

2004-2007 - Expanding the process of networking on parenting

A. PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING:

- Organisations already empowered by BMRF on LTPC started training other staff in their own organisations and moved into new projects.
- Many NGOs made contact with BMRF in order to partner in the programme to focus on different issues around "Parenting" - for street children, child labour, child abuse, adoptive parents, tribal children, women's groups, adolescents and primary school children, immigrant children, commercial sex workers, religion based institutions, etc.
- Working with more languages and thus empowering NGOs in Maharashtra and Gujarat, and endeavouring to cover Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Bengal as well.
- The merging of all initiatives hitherto undertaken around "Parenting" into the Network for Information on Parenting, thus opening up new avenues of partnerships.
- Adapting LTPC to include children with special needs, with the support of organisations working in the field of disability and working with the new tool.
- Participation in International Conferences.
- Enhancing the Parenting Resource Centre.

B. TRAINING

- Crèche workers.

- Institutional caregivers in destitute homes and adoption units.
- Community health workers and other field-level functionaries.
- ECCD training institutions.
- Parents and teachers through the "Joy of Parenting" programme.

C. WORKING WITH THE GOVERNMENT

The first group to be addressed as early as 1998 was the communication officers, supervisors and *anganwadi* workers of the Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project (now ICDS III), involved in training the *balwadi* or day-care workers in Government day care centres. The purpose of this project was the empowerment of mothers and to bring down the level of malnutrition through supplementary feeding. This training and the feedback from these functionaries led to the adaptation of the LTPC (Tamil version, Birth to 3 Years) into a **Flip Chart**.

Salient features of the flip chart:

- Pictures were of South Indian families, from rural areas or urban slums.
- Designed to cater to parenting needs, without gender discrimination
- Included grandparents and supported traditional child rearing techniques.
- Captions were statements, not children's comments.
- Details were added to SPRUC, and nutrition, health, immunisation and a checklist for disability were introduced.

The English version of the transformed LTPC was the Flip Chart presented in October 2000 at an international conference organised by the UNICEF at New Delhi to celebrate 25 years of the ICDS programme.

In 2002, LTPC (Birth-3 Years) indigenised and adapted through the UNICEF sponsored programme and in partnership with ICDS were given to 30,000 *anganwadi* centres in Tamil Nadu along with in-house departmental orientation/training.

Soon, in collaboration with the Department of Health and the UNICEF, the training of 400 medical personnel was undertaken through the Border District Strategy.

In 2006, MSCERT under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Programme adapted LTPC for Maharashtra and distributed the new tool to 20,000 *balwadi* centres. In this tool - all the stages, Birth to 6 Years, were brought into one colourful

calendar. The visuals alone were now changed to Maharashtrian faces and settings appropriately, eg. children playing outdoors in the snow was changed to playing in the sand. All the messages were translated into Marathi.

Ongoing Programmes triggered by the LTPC

An ongoing programme emerged from these early experiences and the Bala Mandir team evolved the draft module of SPRUC for adolescents and adolescent-parent interaction. There were inputs from the latest research findings. Bala Mandir subsequently developed a programme for schools and community-based organisations.

Training caregivers on an ongoing basis and a yearly evaluation session for those already trained became the set pattern.

1. Training crèche workers as and when they join the Bala Mandir Crèche and Day Care, as well as a six-monthly evaluation session for all workers.
2. Home visitors' programme, twice a year, for all children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years.
3. Ongoing parenting training for all parents, when they admitted their children into the crèche.
4. Adolescent programmes on parental readiness.

Bala Mandir Research Foundation started functioning as a Resource Centre, where ECCD trainees from other institutions came and spent a day to get an orientation to good parenting.

In this context, the decisions were taken to upgrade the Resource Centre with more facilities to cater to public demands like OHP, TV, video player, audio player, age-appropriate toys and "parenting games", a library with books, resource materials and videos. Some of these were provided by the Canadian partner.

The Resource Centre is now vibrant, with the focus on children and activities for them. It also serves as a counselling centre and a place for meetings on child-rearing ideas and learning about children.





Chapter 5

AERIAL ROOTS GROW TO REACH OUT

Reaching out in different environments through partnerships

The seed that was sown in Bala Mandir Research Foundation in 1997 had now taken root and grown like a banyan tree with aerial roots that reached out to various parental settings through partnerships. This resulted in the strengthening of parenting activities, networking and dissemination of LTP messages in different settings.

NGOs

Most programmes for children are now finding the benefits of good parenting practices and are reaching out to the communities in a positive way.

As mentioned earlier, a pilot project was undertaken in partnership with Community Health Cell - Bangalore. It laid the foundation for the future work undertaken by BMRF to train workers serving children from difficult parenting environments.

Tsunami victims

The disaster had caused trauma to thousands of people: there was loss of home and family and an unsettled feeling in a new environment.

After the Tsunami, several institutions approached BMRF to train their childcare workers, with the twin objectives of being empowered to run the large number of crèches, which were started and handle the psychological trauma of older children as well. There were infants and toddlers as well as older children, who were reached through the messages of Sense of Self, Relationship and Communication in the Calendar.

Training of childcare workers in three Tsunami-affected areas in partnership with following voluntary organisations was undertaken.

Nagapattinam - Sirkali District - 25 childcare workers, 25 community volunteers and 5 co-ordinators, in partnership with Avvai Village Society.

Kanyakumari - 35 childcare workers from 14 NGOs who are running *balwadis* in the area in partnership with Bala Mandir Kamaraj Trust.

Palverkadu - 30 childcare workers from five NGOs in partnership with CHC - Chennai.

Tribal communities

These are generally isolated and have no access to any aspect of the developmental process. They are mostly unlettered and suffer from deprivation and poverty.

In partnership with Holy Cross Rural Comprehensive programme at Kollegal, an intervention into a one-year certificate course called GRIHINI Course for adolescent girls from the nearby tribal villages was undertaken. The 30 participants in the age group of 15 to 20 years took the training. There was a special focus on self-esteem, self-confidence and enhancement of the skills of communication.

Children in institutions

The children in institutions cannot relate to their own parents and families, and may be emotionally deprived. They lack direction and probably have no access to cultural and family values.

For those caregivers handling children below six, LTPC was directly useful. For those handling older children, an understanding of SPRUC in LTPC gave the necessary insights into child development. For the adolescents, training on LTPC gave an understanding of their own childhood and preparation and readiness for their future parenting.

BMRF partner, APSA, extended this programme for the girls in the Navajeevana hostel, most of whom come from distressed backgrounds (runaway children, child labour, children rescued from various kinds of abuse, domestic workers, street children and so on). There was a notable behavioural change in the girls, with an increased sense of responsibility, enhanced self-esteem and eagerness to communicate and interact with the outside world.

Homeless families, who live on the streets. They are unsettled and uncertain about the future. They move at short notice in search of livelihood and have no opportunity for bonds or permanent relationships.

Parenting Sessions for "Street parents" - in Bangalore in partnership with APSA. The programme included interacting with over 300 persons in three areas.

The main objective was to create awareness on the importance of parenting and the responsibilities of the parents to opt out of begging and try and send their children to school. It provided an interesting interaction and a tremendous learning opportunity for the trainer to understand that whatever the socio-economic status of the parents their aspirations for the child to do well are the same.

Community Crèches - These have been necessitated because of **working mothers** who have to eke out a living and have no time or help for child rearing.

BMRF had initially partnered with ICCW-TN (2002-2003) and trained 67 crèche workers at Vellore, Chennai and Madurai to cover urban, semi-urban and rural areas soon. Organisations like Women's Voluntary Association, Tamil Nadu and more recently SEWA in Gujarat have trained their crèche workers, in order to implement the programme through their large network of crèches.

Members of Gujarat FORCES have also been oriented to LTPC and are awaiting further training to enable implementation and reach out to parents.

Migrant workers - characterised by several disadvantages, uprooted from their own homes, coping with another culture and language, with uncertain futures, with both parents in the labour force and there is a lack of opportunity for their children's education.

Mobile Creches, Pune, organised the training of 27 crèche workers and supervisors and undertook the field testing of the Marathi translation of LTPC. This training helped them to understand multi-level teaching, age-appropriate psycho-social needs of children, the steps required for academic readiness and how to counsel parents.

Mobile Creches, Bombay, has also undertaken the LTPC training along with 10 NGOs in Bombay.

Religious institutions - Due to religious regulations, some schools and residential institutions have their own parenting practices. Their codes and restrictions were respected and the programme adapted to their requirements.

Anjuman-I-Islam - Orphanage for Muslim girls, Pune - Fifteen adolescent orphan girls were given a 3-day workshop on parental readiness. This largely constituted pre-marital counseling.

As part of this partnership, LTPC 3 to 6 Years, was translated by Anjuman-I-Islam into Urdu and is now ready for printing.

"AIM For SEVA"- had their LTPC training, for an understanding of child development and Hindu scriptural dicta around parenting, in order to prepare them for their project "Chaatralaya" - institutional care of under-privileged children of 10 years and above.

Commercial sex workers - The children are exposed to the harsh realities as they watch their mothers at 'work' and they suffer neglect. The mothers and children are deprived in many ways.

A recent partnership with **Swadhar, Pune**, where 30 childcare workers and teachers were trained in October 2005, was evaluated by Rochelle Fine of Hincks-Dellcrest in January 2006. It was seen that the training had empowered the organisation to initiate activities to focus on children below 3 years.

THE SOIL IS ENRICHED

Augmenting and adding value

The versatility of the tool helped in reaching out to many groups such as medical professionals, childcare workers and health workers.

It also lent itself to developing new toys and activities as well as to cultural adaptations such as Tamil songs and a reference point to traditional Tamil literature.

There are programme outcomes, interesting tools, training workshops and case studies and documents that have emerged as a result of the added dimensions.

SPECIAL NEEDS

A project partnership with Vidya Sagar for children with high risk birth history involved training of special educators and CBR workers, working with parents and bringing out 100 case studies. Several partner organisations working with disability were consulted in the adaptation of the LTPC.

This tool (ADLTPC - Accepting Diversity LTPC) with an accompanying User Manual was developed in 2005.

Several advantages of using the adapted tool have been noted. Some of them are stated below.

- Parents and caregivers see the whole child and focus on the child's abilities rather than on the disability.
- Parents gain confidence to have a meaningful dialogue with the therapist.
- The trainers are enabled to plan programmes for the child at the actual level of ability.
- Even the non-professional can use the tool.

In May 2005, two workshops were held by Usha Ramakrishnan for teachers and therapists from a variety of settings, on the use of the Adapted "Learning Through Play" Calendars, at the Hincks-Dellcrest Centre at Toronto, Canada. The workshops were co-ordinated in Toronto by Rochelle Fine and Ramani Jayakumar.

The objective of the workshops was to share the rationale for the adaptation of the Learning Through Play Calendars and give a demonstration of the use of the adapted Calendar. It helped participants to shift from the "medical model" of childhood disability to the "citizenship model".

At the World Forum in Early Childcare and Education at Montreal, Canada, Usha Ramakrishnan made a presentation of the adapted Learning Through Play Calendars for children with special needs, on the 20th of May 2005. Over 800 participants, experts in their area of childcare from 91 countries, participated in the 3-day event in an atmosphere charged with positive energies where each one shared something and learnt something.

This was presented in the session on "Social Health Issues for Young Children' Mental Health, Nutritional Health and Environmental health." The presentation was reported to be well-received.

On 15th December 2005 at the S. Manjubhashini Memorial Seminar, titled *Dynamic Inclusion*, the ADLTPC Kit was launched. 1,000 sets have been printed, supported by the Sarathy Foundation, USA.

The ADLTPC has been taken forward in phases:

Phase I

The LTPC tool was tried and tested with community-based rehabilitation (CBR) trainers from several NGOs. The first workshop was with APD of Bangalore.

Phase 2

Training of CBR workers from five organisations. They were all experienced workers and the organisation they represented had been in partnership with Vidya Sagar for over five years. The tool was presented as a ready reckoner. They would see whether they could do a complete assessment and suggest a programme based on that assessment.

With regard to using the LTPC for special needs, the following were noted:

- There were no separate assessments for receptive and expressive communication.
- There was a lacuna. Activities for daily living skills needed inclusion.
- The activities suggested in the Calendar needed to be increased.

The findings were presented under the theme of "Keys for Successful Inclusion":

- At the National Conference in January 2004 at Chennai.
- At the North South Dialogue III on Inclusive Education organised by the Spastics Society of India, held in 2005 at New Delhi.

Hincks-Dellcrest gave official permission for treating the ADLTPC as an Indian tool. Its use was envisaged in the following ways:

1. As a tool for parents - that will empower parents and caregivers to build upon the much needed collaborative process with the professionals.
2. As a parenting resource - which professionals can use along with their own checklist and screening tools.
3. As a training tool - for CBR workers and professionals, special educators and developmental therapists, doctors and social workers.

4. A tool for sharing with partners in India and with international organisations like Handicapped International, international partners of Vidya Sagar, MNC and SPASTN - who found the demystified approach very attractive.

Early identification and intervention for disability through the LTPC is now part of the LTPC training programme.

Childcare professionals - Though they are fully equipped with knowledge of child development and childcare, the Hincks-Dellcrest Calendars have provided them a pictorial tool, which gives a fresh impetus to simplifying and demystifying childcare.

The LTPC has been introduced to the following -

- Pediatricians - members of IAPE - Kumbakonam Chapter
- Professional women representatives of the Afghanistan Government visiting India under the Colombo Plan, organised by the T.T.K. Hospital (LTPC in Farsi).
- Counselors working in de-addiction centres in Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu organised by the T.T.K. Hospital.
- Kindergarten teachers from 4 schools in Pune for a 6-day training programme organised by J.N .Petit School for boys.
- KG teachers from the following city schools - PSBB, Rajaji Vidyashram, CLRI and Lady Andal in Chennai.
- Concurrent session at All India Conference of IAPE at Baroda.
- Members of IAPE, Mumbai.

Cultural adaptations - A music cassette and CD were released in 2006. They contained parenting songs in Tamil, rendering parenting messages musically, starting from conception through pregnancy and every stage of development, Birth - 6 Years. Songs on accepting disability, the joy of parenting, importance of play, toys and friends were also included.

Verses from the ***Divyaprabandam***, (a well-known 10th century Tamil sacred text) were selected and translated. The document is ready for publication. This describes traditional child rearing practices in Indian culture. Some of them have been shown to have contemporary relevance. The developmental messages in the LTPC have a few similarities to those in the ancient text.

An annual cultural calendar, connecting the seasons and festivals in the year to child rearing practices, has been compiled. This is to be published shortly.

Crèche Activities

In crèche and preschool, while expanding on the messages of the Calendar, a set of activities and games that enriched the experience of the children was developed, based on the visual and messages. Toys designed by Children's Garden School and manufactured in Bala Mandir, helped to bring out a comprehensive Toy Manual. This tool helps parents and teachers understand age appropriateness of toys, developmental inputs, alternative adaptations and the importance of play for children.

Support to the caregiver - While emphasising parenting practices for the institutionalised child, certain adaptations were made in the emphasis of particular domains of development, such as sense of self and relationships. As an outcome, care and support for the caregiver assumed great significance.

A new document has been prepared specifically to deal with **SPRUC for caregivers** and has been appended to the guidelines for interaction with parents.

Health

Any programme dealing with children has to include the preventive, promotive and curative aspects of health care. These have been now included in the training programmes. Practitioners in the medical field have been specifically addressed and the psycho-social aspects emphasised.

As early as 1998, a need was felt by trainees to add health and nutrition messages to the support materials being prepared for LTPC. These have now been incorporated into the Guidebook for Parenting.

A handbook for medical professionals, particularly for gynecologists, pediatricians, nurses and community doctors is awaiting publication. It is based on SPRUC and LTPC and focuses on their parenting role from conception onwards.

A pilot project on early intervention for developmental delays using LTPC in combination with Nippising Developmental Scale was conducted through the Bala Mandir School health programme. It covered over 300 orphans, destitute

and deprived children from the institution and the nearby slum over a 3-year period. This intervention has had positive results.

Nutrition

Though the feeding of children is an integral part of childcare, many caregivers needed more information on these aspects. These have been added.

A pilot project on Nutrition and Parenting Practices, focusing on communication of best practices for change in nutrition and documentation of childcare practices in conditions and contexts of deprivation was conducted in 2002-03. This action study was held in four project sites focusing on different populations in partnership with

- a. TNVHA and its network of NGOs in 5 districts of Tamil Nadu - in the rural areas.
- b. RUHSA in the 5 panchayats of K.V. Kuppam Block to SHG groups.
- c. Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children - an activity-oriented intervention in nutrition and childcare practices in institutions and in different communities in Ramnad District.
- d. VICH for health professionals - doctors, staff nurses and ANMs in Dharmapuri district, through systematic training workshops.

A guidebook on feeding practices which is the culmination of this project, is awaiting publication.

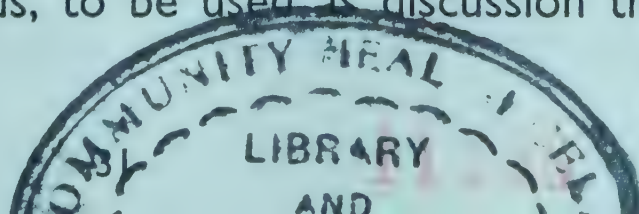
A workshop on nutrition and feeding practices for special needs children was held.

As resource material, the Hincks-Dellcrest booklets were consulted. They were *Feeding your baby 6 months to 1 year* and *Mealtimes Matter*.

Sex Education

Gender sensitivity and need for age-appropriate sex education was the natural outcome of the LTPC programme. This led BMRF to formulate the following:-

- Life cycle approach to the parenting programmes through the Network for Information on Parenting.
- "Parenting the Adolescent" and "Parental Readiness for Adolescents" through a series of flash cards, to be used as discussion triggers during group meetings.



- The topics include sex education, sexuality, relationship, abuse and life skills.

Environment

This has been interpreted in various ways as the immediate environment of the child in the home, in school and in the community. The environment has to be conducive to learning and holistic development, where the child learns both by example and instruction.

The environment also refers to the natural environment which includes all beings and ecology. Children are sensitised to global phenomena.

There are programme outcomes, interesting tools, training workshops and case studies and documents that have emerged as a result of the added dimensions. The details are available in a list that is attached.

Thus the banyan tree is growing and spreading its shade to more people.

ENJOYING THE SHADE

Some observations from the Training and Trainee feedback and later interactions are:

1. Individual trainees accepted the messages personally and then conveyed them to their family members and later to the community they served.

The messages of love and concern are very strong and have helped build family relationships and understanding of child development through the five domains -SPRUC

2. There was need for multi-farious training and dissemination methodologies to suit the partner organisations and the community they served.

The fact that brain development starts in the womb was new learning for many participants. The importance of the psycho-social and nutritional needs of the pregnant mother having a direct impact on the child is a vital message, which is slowly helping to change the attitudes towards women.

The concept of *rangoli* (traditional decorative patterns) to explain effective stimulation and brain development was found to be interesting and innovative. Not only does the *rangoli* signify an ordered pattern of

development with appropriate stimulation, it also depicts more and more complex development.

Since LTFC is a holistic programme many problems and doubts regarding health, nutrition and early identification for disability were solved. Pictures and messages are simple and clear and helped in the understanding of milestones.

3. Inclusion of fathers and grandparents has become very easy, since the men and elders can see themselves in the Calendar and also understand how they can interact with their young children. The parenting values expressed are universal and since the messages are seen to come from the child, even the adolescents and elders in the family are interested in them.
4. The parenting values expressed can be used for older children and to create awareness on child rights and needs.
5. The stories and examples and case studies shared have helped field workers be-friend parents and others in the community.
6. Since messages are in their own language, participants and parents are very comfortable and that makes the trainer or resource persons approachable.





Chapter 6

THE CANOPY

The Network on Information for Parenting (NIP)

The need for a Network on parenting emerged at a meeting on 2nd March 1999, during a peer group review of the new parent education tool - (Birth to 3 Years) - a Flip Chart in Tamil, which had come out as a result of indigenisation of the Hincks-Dellcrest, (Toronto, Canada) "Learning Through Play" Calendar.

The group consisted of NGOs, ECCD professionals, education and research institutions and Government departments of Social Welfare and Education. This work was undertaken by Bala Mandir Research Foundation and was sponsored by UNICEF.

Background and rationale for NIP

The overarching question posed was, "Do we need a focus on parenting, which is natural for all human beings?" The answer was a resounding YES.

The tasks and skills of parenting today, in times of socio-economic and cultural changes, are more complex and different from the past. Family and community life structures are changing rapidly, both in the rural and urban areas and the parenting role needs to be clarified.

There was thus a felt need for a competent body to address aspects of care and development and rights of children below 6 years, with special focus on children from birth to 3 years.

This dynamics of exchange and consolidation includes working actively with and supporting ongoing programmes with quality inputs and expertise on

parenting issues. It must be noted that there are very few institutions and programmes that focus on children below 3 years. The significance of the dimension of parenting in ECCD has not had the emphasis it merits and a new initiative to address it in an organised way was sought.

There was need to converge, consolidate and strengthen existing efforts and expertise in ECCD, to promote the best interests of the child. A platform was created to facilitate exchange of ideas and experiences, discussions and debates on issues of child development.

The Network today

The Network is a loosely federated democratic body with a membership which has built itself around the first group of participants of March 1999.

This parent body of networking institutions is co-ordinated by a Secretariat and advised by a Core Group, with a focus on contemporary issues and current concerns of parenting.

The objectives of the Network are:

- **to enhance work** being done by individuals and organisations, and
- **to provide a platform for sharing** information with each other.

The dynamics of exchange and consolidation includes working actively with programmes and supporting like-minded people, with quality inputs and expertise on parenting issues. The consolidation of expertise in ECCD is a happy outcome. The Network also provides a platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences on child development.

The Network today brings together all the participating institutions and individual members, as well as concerned stakeholders, on the issue of good parenting practices. It clearly addresses all those in a parenting role.

The Processes of the Network

- **To serve as a catalyst** to increase awareness, develop materials and identify strategies on issues affecting children.
- **To build bridges** and foster networking, working across conventional divisions, putting people in touch and serving as a communication point.
- **To serve as sounding board** and enable dialogues with funding agencies and decision makers, for policy formulation programming and implementation.

- **To propagate and support efforts for:**
 - strengthening capacities and coping abilities of parents and communities
 - creating a positive nurturing environment for all children, especially from deprived and un-reached communities.
 - enhancing culture-specific, developmentally-appropriate child rearing practices.
- **To delineate the stages of parenting**
 - Parental Readiness
 - Planning for Parenthood
 - Preparing for Safe Motherhood
 - Welcoming the Baby
 - Nurturing the Infant - Toddler - Child - Adolescent.

RESTING UNDER THE TREE

Some reflections on the LTPC

What LTPC does not state - but makes us think about and understand:

- Marital harmony and shared responsibility of both parents.
- Need to pay close attention to the child.
- Being prepared for the child's emerging abilities.
- Dealing with older children, particularly adolescents.
- The central need to create a loving environment and moving away from the rigidity and regimentation of an institution.

Attitudinal change in social workers and adoptive parents.

- It enabled a more personalised service.
- Understanding the child before adoption.
- Informing the parents about their child.
- What to look for during home visits.
- Counselling, preparing and reassuring.

Counsellors and animators and working with alcoholism and drug addiction.

- The Calendars helped to understand the reasons for addictions - deprivation in childhood.
- It also helped to deal with family care and concern and attitudes during rehabilitation.

Orphans and destitute adolescents and young adults

- Friendship vs. Relationship.
- The responsibility to the "unborn" or "unconceived" child.
- Preparation for family life and parenthood.

Children in difficult circumstances - child labour, street children, drug abuse, sexual abuse.

- Helping them enjoy moments of "childhood".

Health Workers

- The need to look at the child holistically beyond health and nutrition.
- The 'how' of health and nutrition practices going beyond the 'what'.
- Need to emphasise parental involvement with the child.
- Early identification and early intervention.

Differently-abled children

- Identification of abilities and focusing on them.
- Attitudes to the child, bonding, inclusion vs. isolation.
- Confidence in parenting and understanding the needs of all children at different ability levels.

NEW LEAVES AND BERRIES

Translations of LTPC

In 2004, as more linkages with different states in the country were developed it was understood that there was need for LTPC translations to take place and in each case the following steps were undertaken:-

- Calling in persons from different walks of life, living in Chennai, with a strong basic education in their mother tongue.
- Orienting them to LTPC and then requesting them to translate the messages into simple language.
- Getting representatives of the Government – ICDS, NGOs working with children, medical and ECCD professionals – to look at it and endorse or suggest changes.
- Field testing it with NGO partners before finalising the printing.

LTPC English and Tamil have been in India since 1997.

The above method has been successfully followed for **Kannada, Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati**.

LTPC Malayalam and Telugu – while the translation endorsement is over, and is available since 2004 – field testing through a LTPC project is pending, as a suitable partner has not been identified..

LTPC Bengali – is yet to be taken to West Bengal for field testing.

LTPC Urdu, is ready and used in some schools.

PRUNING THE TREE

LTPC Training Programme

Initially the training went on for 20 days, later reduced to 10 days (50 hours) and in 2002 - 2003 it was reduced to 5 full days – 25 hours. The programme, apart from presentations and discussions, comprises of role play, songs, games and various activities for trainees to understand, not only LTPC concepts, but parenting styles and practices, communication methodologies, handling behaviour problem of children, etc.

As a result of the feedback of all the earlier training programmes, the need to train on early identification and intervention for special needs has been recognised. From the year 2004, a 6-day training programme (30 hours) has been instituted in the following manner:-

Day 1 – ECCD – LTPC concepts.

Day 2 – LTPC Birth-3 years.

Day 3 – LTPC 3-6 years.

Day 4 – Orientation for academic readiness, play-way methodology for 3 to 6 years.

Day 5 - Early identification and intervention for disability, health and nutrition.

Day 6 - Parenting and behavioural issues relating to children.

Further to request from implementing partners this training programme has been further enhanced to include practical demonstration of interaction with parents.





Chapter 7

NURTURING THE TREE

PEER ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Though there had been many informal and in house self-assessments and reviews, it was time to 'evaluate' the effect of the various training programmes in parenting conducted by Bala Manadir. A decade had gone by and a decision was taken by the team to do a 'peer assessment' in an informal way, with appropriate interventions and suggestions.

The main objective was to look at, analyse and understand the effectiveness of the "parenting initiative" undertaken by BMRF. It was an inclusive approach - organisations and their staff, and the communities they reached out to, were all included. The trainers/disseminators at different levels were interviewed.

In all cases, baseline data, in the strict sense of the term, was not available. The memory of the participant, and personal narratives constituted the major source for the conclusions drawn.

The BMRF team – Rama Narayanan, Anandalakshmy, Indu Balagopal, Prema Daniel, Anne Panghat, Hema Srinivas, Maya Gaitonde and Lakshmi Gopal undertook to assess the programmes in Tamil Nadu, while Veda Zachariah and Lakshmi Krishnamurti observed the programmes in Karnataka. Maharashtra was assessed by Veda Zachariah and Maya Gaitonde, while Gujarat, New Delhi and Punjab were again assessed by Maya Gaitonde.

IN TAMIL NADU

The Course of the Programme

Phase I

The LTPC tool which has been with Bala Mandir since September 1997 was

used initially only in Bala Mandir for teachers and caregivers, in the Crèche, Day Care Centre and the Bala Mandir institution.

- In 1999 it went to ICCW, CGS, SCS Kothari – as an intervention into 3 training institutions.
- Most of the other projects on Tamil Nadu were under the banner of NIP – ICDS, Border District Strategy, Networking with NGOs and W.D.C.
- A pilot project under NIP banner through 4 different change agents, namely SHGs, NGOs, institutions working with disability and medical professionals – ALL using Birth to 3 Year Flip Chart, the tool indigenised and adapted from LTPC (Birth to 3 Years).

Phase II

Between 2002-04

- LTPC was used for training 67 ICCW crèche workers.
 - Trained workers aware of school readiness.
 - Inputs of nutrition and health from the ICDS experience had been added to the User Manual along with a simple disability identification check-list.
 - Training was expanded to 5–10–15 day periods being covered within one week/3 months/ 6 months to 1 year.
- KG teachers from schools like PSBB and RVA, CLRI, Lady Andal and WVS were trained. Parents were also trained.

The main feedback from all the above was the request for training on disability as well.

Around the same time, Bala Mandir went into a partnership project with Vidya Sagar, who reached out through 10 special educationists to 100 parents and through their CBR partners to the community.

- Positive results from this project gave an indication of the extent and potential of LTPC for usage in 'inclusion' and identification.
- Adaptation of the LTPC tool format into ADLTPC (Accepting Diversity) took place. The tool was launched in December 2005.

NGOs in Tamil Nadu

Indian Council of Child Welfare

The trainees in the ICCW programmes were from their crèches in **Chennai, Usilampatti and Vellore.**

They felt that the training had improved their handling of children. They acknowledged the tool's usefulness in strengthening their knowledge base in the area of stimulation activities. Mothers developed confidence in organising creative play with their children and in spending quality time with them.

Since ICCW had internalised the parenting programme and their trainers had developed excellent LTPC teaching methods they incorporated it into their ongoing in-house and refresher training programmes.

Jeeva Jyoti had passed on their knowledge to their *balwadi* workers in the Red Hills project.

Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Association

The TNVHA trainees were already trained in issues of health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS. The added input in the psycho-social area was appreciated.

This training led to a spread to 300 institutions in 12 districts of Tamil Nadu.

Outcome

- In response to requests, the sixth day of training was introduced exclusively for training on the LTPC for the identification of disability. All training on this topic in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka, 2005 till date have been undertaken by Jaya Krishnaswamy.
- There were many respondents who said that they had undergone personal transformation.
- All felt that the interactive and interesting methodology of training helped them retain their newly-learnt skills of communication. However, it was beyond their skill to translate this knowledge into programmes for the community.
- Community outreach was minimal, as only the first step had been taken - the unfortunate devastating natural calamity – the Tsunami in December 2004 in Tamil Nadu led to a training need on ECCD issues.

- Many funding agencies invested money in starting childcare centres and organisations like AVVAI in Srikali, NGOs in Palverkadu and others in Nagercoil, opened crèches but there was a dearth of ECCD trained staff.

In each of these areas, a group of 15 to 20 persons were trained. Capacity building in parenting skills was the major objective. The child caregivers and the community workers were familiar with much of the substantive content of the training, but the focus on the child's self-esteem was new and exciting. They also felt that the new knowledge in handling behaviour problems of children would be an asset.

There seemed to be no conflict in their own beliefs and the messages in the Calendar.

- Since Palaverkadu was a Tsunami-hit area, the need to respond to their immediate needs was pre-eminent. The trainees ranged from 19 to 55 years of age. In Palverkadu and Ponneri, the trainees were enthusiastic about parenting issues. They were keen on women being empowered.
- In Nagercoil - The training programme led to the formation of a Master Trainers Team.

Adoption Agencies

Training of social workers and supervisors in adoption agencies was mainly on the parenting skills of caregivers in institutions. There was a need to focus on health care and nutrition, where the infants are mostly in the 'high risk' category and do not have access to breastfeeding and individualised care.

It helped to focus on parenting issues of caregivers in institutions and highlighted the need for enlightening the caregivers.

Presentations at adoption forums identified the great need for such a programme. The tool, as a self trainer for parents, became obvious.

This training was the forerunner for an initiative to be undertaken to reach out to adoption agencies since they deal with children who grow up in an institution but have to adapt to new home environment and 'parents'.

Schools in Chennai

- PSBB Schools in T. Nagar and K.K. Nagar
- Central Leather Research Institute School

- Lady Andal School
- Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram

The numbers in the institution or school varied, from 12 in one case to 130 in another. The responses were similar and a summary of them is presented here.

Most of the trainees felt that the training had helped their personal development. They found the LTPC very easy to use and felt it would be a good tool in communicating with parents. The concepts in the Calendar reinforced their knowledge of child development, especially in the case of children with special needs. After the training, they felt that children's behaviour problems would be easier to handle. The importance of an informal way of talking to young children became apparent to many. Accepting that 'play' was the curriculum, was, for many teachers, a paradigm shift. The concept of multiple intelligences was an eye-opener and helped the teachers to shift from a monolithic focus on the formal learning skills. Their own self-confidence had got a boost.

However, there were many drawbacks which depended on specific reasons:

- PSBB needed a yearly training programme for KG teachers.
- To continue to work with LTPC (RVA)
- Need for further training because of change in staff. (CLRI)
- No need for Calendar or parenting programme since the school has it all and knows it all. (Lady Andal) This school felt that there was nothing new to learn.

Training Institutions

- ICCW – Bala Sevika Training Programme
- SCS Kothari Academy for Women
- Children's Garden School, Mylapore

In 1999, it was used in the ICCW Bala Sevika training programme to introduce the concept of 'parenting' to help them understand psycho-social interactions between adults and children.

Some observations were that

- The visuals were helpful to understand how children grow.
- The LTPC helped to understand activities and the importance of play.

- It helped crèche workers to adapt to the home environments of the children.

The training institutions catering to different socio-economic backgrounds of both trainers and community they served, till 2002 were

- Children's Garden School KG Teacher Training Programme – lower and middle class background.
- S.C.S Kothari Academy – ECCD Training Programme - affluent homes.
- ICCW – Bala Sevika - Bala Mandir Crèche and DCC - urban slums.

The methodology followed was training by BMRF in the first year, support for training in the 2nd year and observation of training in the 3rd year – 1999 to 2002.

Tamil Nadu Voluntary Health Association

The organisation undertook to train, assess and take the programme forward. In the process of training, TNVHA had reached out to caregivers in Tanjore, Pudukotai, Pondichery, Tirunelveli, Villipuram, Cuddalore, Kanyakumari and Tiruvallur.

The master trainers provided the feedback. There were many examples of personal transformation. They had gained information on prevention and handling of disability, parenting styles, importance of play and the need for nurturing not only the child, but the caregiver as well

Some of the drawbacks pointed out were that there was no linkage between training sessions conducted by different people and they needed guidance on programme planning.

KARNATAKA, 2004-07

The LTPC had been introduced into Karnataka five years ago. The intention was to look at the impact it had on the programmes. It would look at organisations which have discontinued the interaction with BMRF/Hema Srinivas, as also at responses that have been indifferent, so as to understand the different dimensions of the processes involved in implementing the parenting initiative.

BMRF had interacted with 15 organisations initially in 2002 at Bangalore. More groups were involved in the parenting initiative over the years.

What follows is how the conception of 'parenting' has taken shape in different organisations according to their particular needs and preoccupations.

It is evident that programmes that continue with parenting are either focused on the issue, or are due to the personal charisma of the trainer, Hema Srinivas.

Those who continue in partnership with LTPC Association of Persons with Disability (APD)

One thread that ties all of APD's projects together is the philosophy of community-based rehabilitation.

"To create equal opportunities at all levels for persons with disability to become contributing members of society."

The CBR workers and therapists used the Calendars to mainly assess the level of development that a disabled child had attained and to plan strategies for the child in all the 5 areas of development.

Some of the community health workers used the Calendars to explain child development to the parents in the community. The community health workers used the same tool with the mothers of the newborn. Others treated it a general resource for information on child development. The teachers felt that the tool enabled them to make a holistic assessment.

Association for Promoting Social Action (APSA)

A rights-based child-centered community development organisation, they work towards the development of the community through a systematic process of empowerment. The parenting programme has enhanced the quality of interaction within the organisation between children and their caregivers.

Their partners in the process are communities of street children, child labourers and other children in distress, including abandoned and runaway children, child victims of abuse and prostitution, children of sex workers as well as the larger communities of the urban slums.

The parenting programme has enhanced the quality of interaction within the organisation between children and their caregivers.

Sanjivini Trust

The field-workers themselves, have taken the content of the Calendar to heart and first applied it to themselves and to their other family members.

Among themselves, they have endless discussions about good and bad parenting; how to bring up children; how to apply the essence of the Calendar content to inter-relationships between adults and so on.

The Sanjivini workers have truly internalised the essence of parenting – over time. An important fact is that Sanjivini's main objective is working with children. The head of the organisation is as much involved with the process as the workers. This has contributed to the success of the programme.

Mobility India – working for disability.

Participants had found the training very useful – it changed their point of view. Whereas, previously, they had focused on '**problems**', now they have become aware of '**abilities**' and the usefulness of focusing on the positive. Also, earlier, it was the '**physical**' they concentrated on. Now they have realised that there are other important areas they should be paying attention to the 'emotional' and the 'social'.

APSA Girls Hostel

Hema Srinivas worked with 30 girls, meeting them every Sunday over a period of 6 months. The response of three of the girls was that they did learn a lot from Hema's training; they recollected her sessions fondly. All three were impressed.

Observations

The training affects different people differently – depending on their position in life and the particular situation they are in when they receive the training. The Calendar is not always centre-stage.

A large number of NGOs had some of their workers exposed to the LTPC. But since it was often just one intervention, without any follow up, it was not possible to estimate the impact. Most of the participants liked the messages and some of them said that this exposure had empowered them.

Observations

Broadly the Karnataka NGO training undertaken prior to 2003 had the following special features.

- Five-day training programme conducted in Kannada by Hema Srinivas only.
- No trainee received a User Manual. Therefore their knowledge was only from the training and from LTPC Kannada.

- Initially none of them were chosen because they worked with early childhood, but came for the training because of an invitation from CHC.

They were unable to use it with the community they serve and also because it was not the mandate of their organisation, they found it difficult to adapt the programme to their work.

NGOs that have discontinued

REDS (Rag pickers Education and Development Society)

The primary objective of REDS (Rag pickers Education & Development Scheme) is to enable uneducated and waste-picking children from the streets of Bangalore and Ranchi. REDS seeks to enlighten the underprivileged with an intervention process aimed at holistic development, ensuring successful integration and participation in the mainstream society.

Since they were fully preoccupied with their priorities, they were not able to implement the parenting programme.

Deena Seva Sangha

DSS is an organisation working in socio-economically backward areas of Bangalore city in the area of water, sanitation and community health. They do not directly work with children but work only in the communities.

Community Health Cell

The Community Health Cell (CHC) grew out of a study-reflection-action project, which started in Bangalore in 1984. The experimental phase of the project was supported by the Center for Non-Formal and Continuing Education, Bangalore, till 1990. In June 1990, the project was reviewed and the Society for Community Health Awareness, Research and Action (SOCHARA) was established and registered. The Community Health Cell became its functional unit. The main functionary was very enthusiastic about the parenting programme, and tried to involve many organisations in the training.

TREDA

Treatment Rehabilitation and Education of Drug Abuse, a de-addiction and counselling centre has been actively involved in a number of social services. Their emphasis has been on improving the lives of backward, poor and

'substance addicted' people in rural and urban areas of Thalavadi. Their main goal is to create a Drug Free Society.

Navajeevana

Their mission is to bring hope and dignity to the lives of girls by empowering them to become self-reliant, enable them to join the mainstream society as dignified, responsible and healthy contributing citizens.

World Vision

This large funding agency had sent three members for the training in 2002 by BMRF. However, they expressed their inability to continue with the group on parenting issues.

Preethi Mahilodaya

This organisation had sent one member for the training in 2002 by BMRF. Subsequently, they expressed their inability to continue with the group on parenting issues.

Organisations that dropped out of the programme because of change of staff

MAYA (Movement for Alternatives and Youth Awareness)

A Karnataka-based organisation working over the past 17 years towards addressing the rights of children, has been consistently focusing on the eradication of child labour. Integral to MAYA's approach is the building of community institutions and their capacities to address issues of livelihood and education.

They have now requested for fresh training.

Belaku Trust – Working with Mother and Child

The Belaku Trust works in villages in rural Karnataka, South India. They serve poor and marginalised households in Kanakapura Taluk, with an emphasis on women and children. Collaboration with existing service providers, rather than duplicating services, is integral to these programmes.

The Trust had too much on their hands at the time of training – but are interested in it now.

Samuha

This is a development organisation and works in Karnataka. Its objective is to improve the quality of life of the people it works with, within defined periods of time.

Organisations that have closed down

Stepping Stones

This organisation was running a day care centre for children with programmes for pregnant mothers. They were part of the initial training in 2002 but subsequently dropped out.

DEEDS

Established in 1989, the Development Education Society (DEEDS) was an Indian non-profit, non-political, non-sectarian organisation. They operated in Bangalore and in several rural areas in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Organisations that changed the focus of their work

Children's Love Castle Trust (Education in technology)

This is an excellent example where a complete village adoption programme with training of parents and volunteers and setting up a parenting resource centre took place. But the focus of work changed to computer education, digital inclusion for the socio-economic and ethno-cultural minorities.

Observations on the training:

- Every organisation appreciated Hema's workshops. The most outstanding reaction was their exposure to how to relate better to people and how to empathise with them.
- Some used the Calendar in the field, but not consistently or continuously. Most organisations worked with a fixed number of families.
- The communities trained had internalised the essence of nurturing/parenting and motivated them to look within themselves and at their relationships with others.
- The ADLTPC was first introduced in Bangalore in Mobility India and APD, both organisations which work with disabled people. In APD, however, both Calendars were introduced, leading to some confusion. As explained to us, the original Calendar was like an introduction to the 'essence' of

what parenting is all about; the Adapted Calendar about the nitty-gritty of growth.

However, with both types of Calendars, carrying the process forward is not something that has happened. There has to be strategic planning to take it forward.

Conclusion

The positives –

- Organisations working with women and children have used the LTPC.
- Organisations working with disabled children used the LTPC to look at the child holistically and not only at the disability.
- The LTPC training made the participants realise the need for pre-school development activities for children.
- The ‘rangoli’ has been an innovative method of communicating the importance of brain development, especially to the unlettered.
- The trainer has handled personal issues of staff before explaining the parenting concept. Therefore, the concept of ‘parenting’ has widened.
- The trainees had something ‘physical’ to take home - the Calendars.

Some gaps identified in Karnataka:

- Training exposed various groups to ‘parenting’, but there was no clear guidance on how to implement it.
- There is no second-line trainer. Training of trainers is urgently required.
- Parenting messages have been given to mothers but the LTPC has not been used to its full potential as a parenting tool.
- The concept of ‘sense of self’ was not understood well. It was often confused with ‘ego’.
- BMRF entered Karnataka with the LTPC and parenting skills training with no set objectives for follow-up. BMRF also did not realise the context in which the Calendar was used in Canada (for example with ‘support services’) and therefore had probably not planned further interventions.
- BMRF interacted with diverse NGOs not necessarily working with small children. Organisations not directly working with small children did not respond well.

MAHARASHTRA, 2004 - 2006

Mobile Creches, Pune - October 2004

A programme working with children of migrant construction workers. All the staff were trained on the LTPC. They all said that their attitude towards children had changed, and that they were more aware and responded better to children.

Swadhar, Pune

This is an organisation working for children in the slums and in particular those of commercial sex workers.

LTPC training of 30 workers has already made an impact in 2 ways.

- The workers feel their whole attitude to child behaviour has changed.
- The organisation felt empowered to open its doors for children below 3 in its service centre.

Anjuman-Islamyath, Pune

The first training of young adolescent girls of the Muslim community. The interesting interaction revealed the needs of the community for such a programme. The involvement and support that the educated women of the community are willing to give to this programme is extremely encouraging.

The trainees were non-formal teachers, book fairies and community workers. Most of them had internalised the parenting messages but still required support for further planning and intervention in the community.

2006 to 2007

A) The training for the 2 NGOs, Mobile Crèches and Swadhar and the group of schools invited by J.N. Petit School – was completed in January 2006 when Jaya Krishnaswamy completed Day 6 of the LTPC training focussing on disability.

Both NGO organisations went ahead with an in-house training of all their workers – by those initially trained by BMRF. Many innovative techniques were used and interesting adaptations made to the LTPC concepts. However while training of workers expanded and workers felt empowered to use the LTPC concepts with children in their care in crèches and day care centres, as well as for children in their own families and neighbourhood, both

organisations expressed the need to observe parenting programmes and meetings conducted around LTPC for parents.

B) **Mumbai** city was added to the expanding LTPC Project in partnership with Mobile Creches, Mumbai. A 5-day training was held for:

- (I) 10 NGOs working for children in Mumbai city. The programme held in Hindi had very positive feedback and an expressed need to continue networking to work with parents of children of older age groups as well.
- (II) In parallel, a 5-day training programme was held for 20 ECCD professionals - members of the India Association of Pre-school Education, whose expertise in ECCD was enhanced by the messages of LTPC. The training programmes were conducted by Hema Srinivas, Maya Gaitonde and Jaya Krishnaswamy. What excited the participants was:
 - The excellent way in which child development was presented visually in LTPC.
 - The development of S P R U C, age appropriately.
 - The simple child-expressed messages that could be so easily shared with parents.
 - The many activity ideas and parenting messages the KG teachers and crèche workers could use successfully in their interaction with children below 6 years.
 - The availability of LTPC in Hindi, Marathi and other languages which could be used in a multilingual city like Mumbai.

C) The above training programmes and the linkages and partnerships that were developed led to a Master Trainer's Training Programme conducted in August 2007 by Maya Gaitonde. This training has empowered Mobile Creches, Pune and Mumbai and Swadhar to take up further training of NGOs in Pune and other parts of Maharashtra. The printing of LTPC in Marathi has given a further fillip to the programme.

GUJARAT, 2005-07

SEWA

This is an organisation with a membership of over a 100,000 women in the

unorganised sector. It runs crèches for children as part of the empowerment programme.

The first orientation programme for 50 field-level functionaries, 10 supervisors and 5 social workers of the SEWA organisation was held in September 2005.

The positive response from field-level functionaries of SEWA, led to request for training of other NGO's in the state. Under the banner of Gujarat FORCES (Forum for Crèche Care and Services), a training was conducted by Maya Gaitonde in August/September 2007 for social workers, coordinators, supervisors and crèche workers of 25 organisations.

The printing of LTPC Gujarati was extremely useful and will give great support to the expansion of the programme in the state.

NEW DELHI, 2007

After the South Asia LTPC Conference 2007, there was an invitation from Mobile Creches – Delhi for training on LTPC – with the Hindi version. The training provided an opportunity for BMRF to field test the LTPC Hindi translation with a group of NGOs not only proficient in the language, but also ready to use it in their day to day work.

New methods of training and activities were introduced by Maya Gaitonde. The feedback was encouraging. However the training and interactions did not lead to the formation of a partnership to take LTPC Hindi forward. The printing of LTPC Hindi was taken up and its usage in the North Indian states will form an integral part of the next LTPC project.

PUNJAB, 2007

An opportunity to present the LTPC in Chandigarh was provided by contacts of BMRF. A one-day orientation workshop was held for ICDS workers at their training centre in Mohali as part of their 2-week in-service training. The workers were from 12 districts of the state. The facilitating organisation was FPAI Punjab.

PLANTING NEW SAPPLINGS

Future Growth

Organisations Interested

There are two other organisations which were trained after 2004 where the effectiveness assessment was not taken up, but which were evaluated in 2005 by Andrew Ressor Macdowell and in 2007 by Rochelle Fine. They will be part of the future project planning in Karnataka (2008-11). They are:

ANV College, Gorur

Third-year sociology students were trained on LTPC and as part of their field work and did an excellent dissemination of parenting messages in the villages around their college. Discussions are presently on as to how to make this an on going, in-house programme for the Department of Sociology.

Holy Cross Comprehensive Community Rural Health Project

This community based rural health organisation in Hannur, Chamarajnagar district, Karnataka state, is a project of the Holy Cross Convent.

The following organisations are keen to continue the partnership and are part of the plan for the period 2008 to 2011.

Tamil Nadu – NGOs through TNVHA, Bala Mandir programme in Nagercoil.

Karnataka – Sanjeevini, APD, APSA and Mobility India will act as partners.

Maharashtra – Mobile Creches Pune and Mumbai, IAPE and Swadhar will take the programme forward. More recently, NASEOH has shown interest.

Gujarat – SEWA with a membership of 7 lakh, will partner BMRF.

Punjab – BMRF needs to consolidate the initial interest shown there.

Kerala and Andhra Pradesh will be included.

In all the cases, we intend to plan strategies for follow-up and pass on the training skills to the local trainers.

With this, we shall plant more saplings everywhere, and have a whole host of banyan trees!!



